

June 2012

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## HH Architecture Offers Up Winning Designs

"If you don't love it, don't do it!" That's the advice Kristen Hess, president of HH Architecture, has for other entrepreneurs. She said the other key to her 7-year-old firm's success has been surrounding the business with great people who give credible counsel. "Having great people you can call is paramount because you have to get good advice."

After graduating from the N.C. State University College of Design, Hess worked eight years in the private sector for an architectural firm. Then she decided to branch out further. When Hess started HH Architecture in 2005 with business partner Chris Horner, she said the company was lean and scrappy. That business mentality is what has helped the company survive the economic recession and grow to a team of 15 full-time employees.



*Kristen Hess is president of HH Architecture. The company headquarters, pictured below, is based in Raleigh, NC.*



[see HH p. 3]

## BOWD 'Project Legacy' Marks Third Anniversary

Project Legacy, NCDOT's premier business development program, just reached the three-year anniversary mark, highlighting numerous successes for enhancing business development statewide. Project Legacy's mission is to increase the capacity of DBE firms through comprehensive training, technical assistance, and relationship-building in areas critical to business success. Firms selected for the program receive training and assistance in areas such as human resource management, marketing, finance and accounting, and operations management. Individual firms applying for admission to Project Legacy must be currently certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise in North Carolina, be a prequalified contractor or consultant, and be in operation for at least one year. Interested firms should log on to [www.ncbowd.com](http://www.ncbowd.com) or email [bowd\\_info@ncdot.gov](mailto:bowd_info@ncdot.gov).

### "One and Ten"

During my last season at Ohio University, I was on a team with a 1-10 record. I thought it was about the worst thing ever. Despite a new coach, and a new program, the season was discouraging and embarrassing. But years later I am thankful for the lesson learned, which is captured in Vince Lombardi's quote, "Winning isn't everything, but the will to win is everything."

I learned this lesson while watching some teammates give up hope after losing 10 games in a row. As co-captain I knew I could not set this type of example; I still had to work hard. Then it happened. After starting 0-10, I had the best game of my career; we won our final game, and I have a great memory.

Growing a small business can be discouraging and can sometimes seem like a losing season at 0-10, but keep working hard, don't lose hope, and eventually you'll get the win you are looking for - and learn lessons that last a lifetime.



*Mr. Shelton Russell  
BOWD Director*



## NCDOT Hosts 30th Construction Career Days Event



***A North Carolina student takes her turn learning to ride a mower as part of the Construction Career Days event.***



***A Construction Career Days instructor meets with students on May 16, about NCDOT job opportunities.***



***A student fine tunes his truck driving skills on a truck simulator exercise in Concord, NC at the CCD event.***

On May 16, NCDOT held its 30<sup>th</sup> “Construction Career Days” event at the Cabarrus Arena and Events Center in Concord, North Carolina. The event hosted more than 600 high school students from nine counties. The day-long event exposed students to various jobs and careers in the construction industry, offering an abundance of hands-on opportunities, from operating heavy equipment such as steers and backhoes to welding, pipe bending, and brick laying.

The success of the event is the result of ongoing partnerships NCDOT maintains with local schools, commercial contractors, highway contractors, and equipment dealers. Construction Career Days allows students the opportunity to meet with vendors and representatives directly involved with highway construction and building trades.

A highlight of the event was an appearance by NASCAR Truck Series Driver David Starr, who is sponsored by the “Build Your Future” (BYF) campaign. BYF is a program geared toward



***L to R, NASCAR's Jimmy Small, David Starr, and NCDOT's Marvin Butler.***

helping young adults and displaced workers receive training and education for jobs in the construction industry. A welder by trade, Starr spoke candidly with the students about the advantages of career training and technical education. He was also joined by NASCAR Industry Marketing Manager Jimmy Small, who spoke to the students about using the sport to create interest in construction careers.





## HH Winning Designs

*[cont'd from p. 1]*

HH Architecture handles commercial design for state and local municipalities, specializing in structures related to Learning, Wellness and Recreation. Under the Learning category, the firm provides design services for universities, including classroom buildings and early college high schools. Wellness facilities in the company's portfolio include hospitals and other locations that provide mental and physical wellness services. HH Architecture also works with Parks and Recreation departments; state, city, and county parks - including a new polar bear exhibit for the North Carolina Zoo.

The HH Architecture approach to a new project is understanding what the client is about – often spending time at the client's location and doing what they do to understand how they will use the facility. "It's really about immersing ourselves in the client's world to get a better understanding," Hess said. In the past, team

members attended cadet school for the Department of Administration's State Highway Patrol Training Academy while working on the facility. They also spent time traveling to various polar bear exhibits and meeting with representatives from zoos to learn how to create a safe, secure, and familiar habitat for polar bears. Hess said, "Whenever I'm designing something new, I'm learning something new." Recently, HH Architecture was selected to do work for NCDOT General Services division, designing general storage sheds in Catawba, Edgecombe, and Sampson counties. Hess said future plans for the company include expanding into road and rail work.

Four years ago, HH Architecture participated in the Executive Management Program. Hess said the business classes taught her how to be competitive, streamline standard business processes, and improve the company's financials. "It was terrific," Hess said. "Every time I learn something new, I feel excited and energized. Every project we get is the best project we've ever had."

## BOWD Sponsors 2012 Model Bridge Building Competition

More than 40 young African American males participated in the Model Bridge Competition hosted by NCDOT BOWD at Enloe High School in Raleigh on Feb. 18 and 25. Students formed 4-5 person teams representing engineering firms competing for a contract to design and construct a bridge. Competing teams constructed model bridges from popsicle sticks and then made presentations about their designs. The bridges were judged on aesthetics, efficiency (calculated by determining how much weight they could bear compared to the weight of the bridge), and the quality of the presentation. The winning team was Creative Construction, whose bridge held 74.96 pounds of weight.

NCDOT engineers and representatives from the NC Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration coordinated the program. The competition was sponsored by 100 Black Men of America Triangle East Youth Enhancement Academy for High School Boys, with a goal of introducing young men to careers in engineering and transportation.





# Success Stories

*Creating Successful Opportunities in Business*



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